

Disaster Victims Residing in Trailers or Hotels/Motels Have 60 an Extra Days to Transition to Permanent Housing

February 12, 2009

WASHINGTON, DC- U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon (LA-03) announced today that Hurricane Katrina and Rita victims in Louisiana who are still residing in FEMA trailers or hotels/motels will have an extra 60 days to find permanent housing for themselves and their families. *Disaster Victims Residing in Trailers or Hotels/Motels Have 60 an Extra Days to Transition to Permanent Housing*

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Rep. Melancon said the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced today that the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) temporary housing program in Louisiana and Mississippi for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita will be extended for an additional 60 days until May 1, 2009. The Katrina/Rita direct housing program is currently scheduled to end on March 1, 2009. In Louisiana, 4,422 households are still living in temporary housing, hotels, and motels. This extension does not cover rental assistance.

"Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the levee failures severely damaged or destroyed over 200,000 homes in south Louisiana," said Rep. Melancon. "Following the storms, the devastating housing shortage caused rents to skyrocket. Thousands of families struggled to find affordable housing.

"While most hurricane victims have since been able to find permanent housing, several thousand households are still in the process of moving from trailers or motels into their new or rebuilt homes. This extension will give them a little extra time to make a smooth transition into a long-term living situation, as well as the peace of mind that they won't be on the street come March 1."

Following is a fact sheet from FEMA on today's announcement.

How long is the extension?

FEMA's temporary housing program for eligible Katrina/Rita individuals and families is being extended an additional 60 days until May 1, 2009, at the request of a state.

Why is DHS extending FEMA's direct housing assistance?

While the majority of Katrina and Rita individuals and families have successfully transitioned to permanent housing, there are still some who continue to need assistance. These participants are receiving an additional two months to complete the successful transition to long-term housing.

Who is eligible for the extension?

If the state has made the request, FEMA will grant the extension for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita eligible individuals and families still living in FEMA-provided housing.

Which states have requested an extension?

At this time, Louisiana and Mississippi have requested an extension.

What is FEMA doing to keep eligible participants on the path to self-sufficiency?

FEMA will continue to work with eligible participants to identify long-term housing solutions to assist residents with the transition into more suitable, long-term housing.

FEMA has contacted every applicant currently residing in a temporary housing unit and hotel/motel in the Gulf Coast to make them aware of available housing resources and will continue to visit and work with each household residing in a hotel/motel or temporary housing unit to transition them into more suitable, long-term housing options.

How will individuals and families be notified about the extension?

FEMA will provide notices to households located in a hotel/motel or temporary housing unit of the extension of assistance to May 1, 2009. All extension notices will be mailed to applicants living in temporary housing units and hotels/motels. FEMA will then hand deliver termination notices to all households still residing in temporary housing units or hotels/motels by March 31, 2009.

Will participants have the opportunity to purchase their temporary housing units?

FEMA is currently giving residents in mobile homes and park models the opportunity to purchase the unit in which they currently are living under the Temporary Housing Units Sales-to-Occupants program.

The sales program is open only to applicants currently residing in a mobile home or park model provided by FEMA. Conditions of the sale include:

- All units are sold "as is" with no implied warranties of any kind.
- Applicants must purchase the unit in which they currently live. No substitutions or exchanges of units are permitted.
- By purchasing the unit, the applicant accepts all responsibility and liability for the unit.
- The purchasing applicant is solely responsible for any applicable sales taxes, permits, or inspection costs associated with the sale.
- The applicant must provide proof of hazard insurance for the unit.

- The purchasing applicant must agree to comply with the local floodplain management codes, including purchasing flood insurance if the unit is or will be located in a designated Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA).

- The unit must test within the state-set formaldehyde threshold.

Current Katrina/Rita Direct Housing Situation (as of 9 Feb 2009)

State

of Households on Private Sites

of Households on Commercial Sites

of Households on Group Sites

TOTAL

Alabama

22

6

0

28

Louisiana

3,977

389

56

4,422

Mississippi

2,189

225

0

2,414

Texas

2

0

0

2

TOTAL

6,190

620

56

6,866

